Highlights of the Governor’s 2018 Agenda include the following:

4. A CLEANER, GREENER AND HEALTHIER NEW YORK: THE WELLNESS AGENDA

Part 1. Protecting the Health of Our Communities

Proposal: Strengthen the Rural Emergency Medical Services System

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are essential for disaster preparedness and public safety, and under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, New York State has strengthened EMS through locally directed efforts tailored to the diverse communities throughout the state. Over 59,000 certified EMS providers serve as critical first-responders throughout New York’s urban, suburban, and rural communities. In the last year alone these providers responded to over three million calls from New Yorkers. For rural EMS, ensuring ambulances are appropriately staffed and able to respond in a timely fashion has become increasingly challenging. The increased demand for EMS response, the increasing cost of providing the service, and the shortage of EMS professionals are leading to a gap between the capacities of the current system and the standard of care New Yorkers deserve. This situation is compounded in rural communities, where low-call volumes generate insufficient revenue to support a paid agency. 255 To address the underlying issues facing rural EMS agencies, Governor Cuomo proposes a three-pronged Strengthening of the Rural Emergency Medical Services (EMS) System plan to recruit, retain and strengthen the EMS system across rural regions of New York State. To ensure that New Yorkers, especially young New Yorkers, are aware of the career possibilities in EMS and the contribution that working in the EMS field makes to their communities, the Department of Health will launch a coordinated digital media and educational campaign to heighten awareness of EMS employment opportunities through partnerships with regional and local health care organizations, area health educational centers (AHECs), and EMS training systems. In addition, to enhance career opportunities for EMS professionals and to improve quality of care and lower costs to the health care system, DOH will propose legislation to authorize Community Paramedicine collaboratives and programs, which will expand the scope of services carried out by emergency medical technicians (EMTs) to include community 256 settings beyond initial emergency care and transportation. Secondly, in an effort to increase the availability of EMS training programs, DOH will work closely with the boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) and community colleges throughout New York to provide educational opportunities in diverse settings outside of the traditional paradigm. The third component of the plan will add sophisticated, in-depth management educational material to enhance existing supervisory training for EMS professionals who want to advance their expertise and take on leadership roles, and to expand interactive web-based offerings and regional seminars in order to reach a broader audience. The Strengthening of the Rural EMS System plan will ensure a trained, effective EMS workforce, and improve the timeliness, quality, and delivery of EMS throughout rural areas of New York State.